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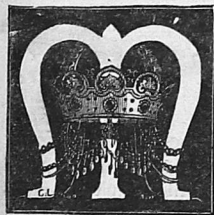
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DECORATION & FURNITURE

AN ARTIST'S SUBURBAN HOME.



HALFWAY, on the high ground between Newark and Orange, New Jersey, there is a cottage "orné" which is unique in its tasteful and artistic adornments. It is the home of a well-known New York journalist and his artist sisters. The house is so situated that the prospect in every

direction is of varied beauty, especially that toward the west, including Orange with its spires and peaked roofs peeping from amid the luxuriant foliage, and the wide range of uplands called Orange Mountains, dotted here and there with residences that resemble castles in the enchantment of distance. A softer, fairer landscape could hardly be imagined, or one more inspiring for the brush or pencil.

This pretty home is built of gray stone, is wide and low, with a hospitable-looking piazza around it, and some bay windows. There is a lawn decked with a multiplicity of flowers. It is, however, with the interior that one would wish to linger in contemplation. The studio, on the right front of the first floor, is divided from the parlor on the left by a broad corridor which leads into a smaller one running across the house at the rear. To a person entering this broad passage from the front door the effect is very pretty. Hanging cabinets are on either side, filled with decorated porcelain, and a parterre of dark momie cloth, barred with crimson and yellow and variegated stitchery, fills the archway and hangs between the larger and smaller corridors. One or two pictures and carved chairs complete the ensemble of this room. The studio is the work-room, where classes convene. Here there are some choice specimens of decorated pottery and tiles, a few panels in water-colors, and one or two attractive oil paintings. It is a cheerful room, as all rooms should be where lessons are given, and it is admirable in all its appointments. Opposite the studio is the parlor or living room. Its peculiar charm is difficult to define. There is nothing elegant within its four walls, and yet how pretty, how homelike, how tasteful it is! The mantelpiece, like the rest of the woodwork, is of oiled pine, which is of a light yellow delicately veined with dark brown. It is somewhat high, and is surmounted with vases and plaques and other ornaments. The tiled fireplace underneath is ready for use, with a backlog on the brass andirons; and the brass fender, shovel and tongs are all relics of a distant New England home. The walls of this apartment, and those of the whole house save one room, are what is termed rough-finished, which gives them an odd appearance. The parlor walls are delicately tinted in a soft gray, with a bordering of crimson, just two or three lines of color. On silver wires, descending from these lines of color, engravings of Turner's pictures are hung all round the room. These are on a level, save where the two large windows and two doors intervene. There are no other pictures in this room, the floor of which is covered in part with a rug made of carpet of small pattern, edged with dark crimson cloth five or six inches wide. The chairs, sofa, and tables are upholstered in palm-leaf material, worked in worsted and silk in dark colors, and there are many implements of feminine industry scattered about mixed with rare books, bouquets in delicate vases, and a general air of pleasant occupancy, and "backlog studies" when a fire glows on the hearth. Opening from the parlor is the library, where the shelves are partly covered with a collection of Syrian books, Dr. W. being a bibliomaniac in Syrian literature. There is also a case filled with hymn-books—one of the sisters being a hymnologist, collecting the old and new hymns of every country, and making a goodly sized library of them. All the light in this room comes from a large bay window, where the writing-desk stands, surmounted by student lamps, and with a large arm-chair in front of it. The dining-room is large for the size of the cottage. When the writer saw it, it was prepared for a tea party. A cut-

glass épergne stood in the centre of the table, filled with flowers. The china was all of different patterns, delicate and beautiful—a few pieces being dark crimson, with black Syrian letters ornamenting the edges. Even the little linen napkins were worthy of notice, being prettily fringed and embroidered in one corner with a motto, a line of poetry from some quaint author, in Kensington stitchery. Two glass cabinets filled with curious china, some historical and some new, adorn the tinted walls, while the chairs and floor are of the prevailing pine wood. It may be well to mention here that every decoration in this cottage has been made by the resident artists, even to the tinting of the walls and the making of the rugs.

In the second story there are several chambers, differing in style. One is antique in its fittings, having old mahogany furniture of pre-Revolutionary fashion; another is all in Eastlake designs. Another, and the prettiest, is worthy of more elaborate description. The old-fashioned high-post bedstead of carved cherry-wood has a white quilt of the most exquisite raised stitchery in flowers and leaves—a kind of quilting made by our grandmothers. The two valances, that of the tester and that which surrounds the bed, are of fine white canvas, embroidered in birds and flowers and leaves, in colored crewels—designs copied from the stitchery on a petticoat found in a New Hampshire home, and said to be over one hundred years old. The mantel lambrequin is of the same canvas and the same design in embroidery, edged with two strips of blue and wine-colored velvets and white lace. The upholstery of the chairs and bureau corresponds with that of the bedstead, while the walls of pale gray are relieved by blue spots—three in a cluster—at regular intervals, as though some fairy had dipped the tips of her fingers in a pot of blue paint and lightly touched the wall in sportiveness. A rug, half covering the floor of one of these chambers, was made in "after hour time"—that is, between the day and evening, in the gloaming. It is of rags, so prettily arranged that it may be called artistic. Here and there, in these upper rooms, are charming bits of coloring, a bunch of hollyhocks in brilliant hues, a plaque of dainty roses, or a bright young face that may be either a portrait or fancy sketch.

In every part of the house there are evidences of artistic skill and patient work. No two rooms have a resemblance; the chairs are all odd, and everything is a surprise. Each article of use or adornment, each fitting of this home, is homelike and inviting, and has an obvious meaning, either for the comfort of the body or the gratification of the eye in its æsthetical longings.

E. E. DICKINSON.

MANTELPiece DECORATION.

WITH the rapidly-increasing spread of artistic ideas in house decoration, a severe blow is being dealt to the comfortless closed stove by the many admirable devices coming into vogue for the ornamentation of the mantelpiece. Of course, a mantelpiece implies an open fireplace. Now and then, it is true, we see in some cheaply-built dwelling a mantelpiece surmounting a dummy fireplace; but such a mockery of the comforts of the good old-fashioned chimney corner is not pleasant to dwell on. Now that our ladies are taking an earnest interest in artistic home decoration, it is safe to say that the days of the hideous old black stove are numbered—for the sitting-room at all events.

Not so very long ago the ordinary mantelpiece decoration was of a slightly limited description; a large mirror backed the chimney piece and reflected on its burnished shield a clock, a pair of candelabra, and two screens, interspersed in some instances with smaller ornaments. This was in the drawing-room; the dining-room mantelpiece varied from it in that the screens and the mirror were lacking, a pair of spill-vases often replacing the former, and a family portrait the latter; the clock was bronze instead of ormolu,

and the candelabra were sometimes replaced by bronzes.

Now this is all changed, and certainly for the better; new fashions in mantelpiece decorations are springing up every day. Those who can afford to go to an artistic upholsterer for their chimney-piece adornments, in the shape of "over-mantels," may be well nigh bewildered by the fascinating combinations of velvet and carved wood (the latter either ebonized or stained and polished a deep lustrous olive, or painted delicate cream or green or pink, or left to its own tone of brown), with decorated and painted panels and tiles, and stamped and gilt leather. All, however, have not purses long enough to allow them to indulge in such charming extravagances; and it is to these especially that the following suggestions for the decoration above their fireplaces are offered. If you have a wood "over-mantel," it should match the woodwork of the room; bric-à-brac shelves, for instance, painted in soft creamy tints, will not look well in a room where the doors and skirtings are black and gold, nor a carved oak one in one where all the woodwork is painted. Wood, however, is not best in a drawing room, velvet looks much better. A triple shelf of velvet, with supports and background of the same material, is a very pretty and not an expensive decoration over a drawing-room or boudoir mantelpiece; the upper shelf should be narrower than the lower, and they may be decked with any lace, or Persian, Japanese or Indian embroidery. The velvet should harmonize with the predominant tint of the room, but must not be of too light or bright a shade—deep olive, claret, or peacock is the most effective. It should be remembered that the object of these shelves is to hold ornaments, and that they require a most alarming amount of bric-à-brac, so if you have not enough china to fill them well it will be better for you to eschew them altogether, and turn your decorative mind in another direction.

Another pretty idea, especially suitable to a boudoir, is a continuation of the mantel-board in the form of a velvet screen of any shape you like against the wall above; this not only makes a good background for the ornaments on the mantelpiece, but is in itself a fine field for decoration, as odds and ends of all kinds look well on it. It is a good plan to have in the middle of the screen a small painting, a plaque or a Dresden or Venetian mirror; this forms a centre, and round it you may hang all manner of things—Indian jewelry, photographs, Japanese screens, quaint fans, china plates and plaques, odd foreign beads, carved ivories, old daggers; in fact, all the thousand and one knickknacks a woman's soul delights in. These will all look well if properly arranged, so that a certain harmony shall obtain among the heterogeneous collection, and each article shall depend for part of its effect on another. If you are fortunate enough to possess small Bartolozzi prints, family miniatures, or even really good water-color sketches, they will look charming sunk in such a velvet screen.

THE Japanese have a kind of mythical adoration of mirrors. To their poetical imagination the sword contains the "Soul of the Samouri." In the same way, the mirror is the "Soul of Woman." The national traditions have it that the sun goddess, sending her adopted grandson, who was the great-grandfather of the first Emperor of Japan, to subdue the world, gave him, among other presents, a mirror. "Look," she said, "on the mirror as my spirit; keep it in the same house and on the same floor as yourself, and worship it as if you were worshipping my very presence."

AT Madame Musard's sale in Paris recently, one of the most notable pieces of furniture sold was a cabinet said to have belonged to Mary Queen of Scots. The decorations were flowers, formed by all the precious stones then known, beginning with diamonds, emeralds, rubies, topazes, and ending with simple agate stones.